

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

October 21, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St., NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

We write to you concerning the Chinese government's repression of ethnic Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and other Turkic people, and to highlight the urgent need to ensure those fleeing China do not face forced repatriation or detention by other governments. Protecting those who have fled China's Orwellian suppression of these ethnic groups requires the support of neighboring governments, including the governments of Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. We ask that you work with your counterparts in these governments to end all deportation efforts to Xinjiang and to ensure the safety of those who do not wish to return.

Uyghurs and other minorities in internment camps in Xinjiang face horrific conditions. This includes beatings, rape, sexual humiliation, forced sterilization, electric shocks and stress positions. After detained individuals are released, they are subjected to 24-hour, inescapable in-person and electronic surveillance designed to ensure the behavior of ethnic minority groups is in line with the PRC's "Sinicization" policies.

Some individuals who were formerly detained or who fear being sent to the camps have fled Xinjiang. The Chinese authorities see these individuals as a threat since many have helped expose the rampant persecution in Xinjiang to the world. To silence these voices, Chinese authorities have waged a decades long campaign to extradite Uyghurs and Turkic minorities abroad. Since 2014, an estimated total of 1,327 Chinese citizens of Uyghur or Turkic descent have been detained or rendered from 20 countries.

These numbers likely represent only a fraction of those subjected to detention or forced repatriation. While hundreds of extradition and imprisonment cases have been reported, human rights experts point to difficulties in collecting evidence, primarily due to the chilling effect of past deportations. Escapees are fearful of being sent back and of what will happen to their family members still in China if they speak out, making it difficult to understand the full scope of risks and abuses facing these groups.

When host governments acquiesce to pressure from the Chinese government and knowingly expose escapees to potential abuses in Xinjiang, they become complicit in the Chinese

authorities' transnational repression against Turkic minorities. Neighboring Central Asian countries, such as Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, have a particularly critical role to play in protecting those fleeing Xinjiang. Most Uyghurs and other minorities fleeing the camps end up in these countries. These governments must not perpetuate human rights abuses by caving to pressure from the Chinese government to detain or deport any person fleeing Xinjiang.

We know that neighboring countries have protected individuals who have fled Xinjiang to varying degrees, and we applaud the many cases where they have chosen to protect those fleeing repression in China. But the application of the principles of nonrefoulment, the rights of asylum seekers, and protections of Uyghurs and Turkic peoples fleeing persecution must be applied without exception. There must be universal assurances from all governments that Uyghurs and other Turkic people fleeing repression in Xinjiang can find safe haven elsewhere.

Mr. Secretary, we encourage you to call on Central Asian governments, including the governments of Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, to:

1. Allow all persons fleeing persecution in Xinjiang to enter their country without delay or restrictions, and ensure they have prompt access to a fair and effective asylum process and the ability to challenge any removal orders.
2. Strictly observe and apply the principle of non-refoulement to all persons, including refugees and asylum seekers, from Xinjiang.
3. Take a stance in bilateral, multilateral, and regional platforms against Chinese authorities' human rights violations in Xinjiang and in support of independent human rights investigators' unrestricted access to Xinjiang to push for the dismantling of the system of discrimination and persecution against ethnic minorities in Xinjiang.
4. Disclose information on persons forcibly returned to China and the grounds for their return including any extradition requests from Chinese authorities.

We look forward to working with you in Congress to assist these efforts.

Sincerely,



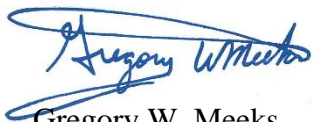
Tom Malinowski
Member of Congress



Young Kim
Member of Congress

cc:

Tajikistan Ambassador to the United States
Kazakhstan Ambassador to the United States
Kyrgyzstan Ambassador to the United States
Uzbekistan Ambassador to the United States



Gregory W. Meeks
Chairman
House Committee on Foreign Affairs



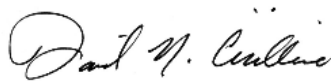
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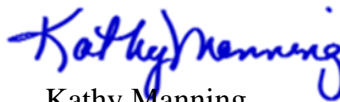
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